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INFO RUEHFK/AMCONSUL FUKUOKA 6389

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SUBJECT: TOKYO MEDIA REACTION - NORTH KOREA AND AFGHANISTAN

¶1. LEAD STORIES: All Thursday morning papers gave top play to yesterday's agreement among the DPJ, the SDP, and the PNP to establish a coalition government.

¶2. "U.S. Considering Dialogue with North Korea while Maintaining Sanctions" Claiming that U.S. Special Representative for North Korea Policy Bosworth explained to Japan, China, and South Korea that the U.S. might hold bilateral talks with North Korea on the condition that they are aimed at jumpstarting the Six-Party Talks, the top-circulation, moderate Yomiuri wrote (8/10): "Washington is showing a positive stance toward bilateral dialogue even though the DPRK has not yet made clear its intent to return to the Six-Party Talks. This is because the U.S. is confident that it can persuade North Korea to come back to the negotiating table, given that it is being economically squeezed by UN sanctions. The purpose of the envisaged dialogue for the U.S. is to demand denuclearization while maintaining sanctions, and to directly relay to North Korea that the Six-Party members will extend assistance to it when the prospect of denuclearization is in sight."

¶3. "Don't Make It Obama's War" The liberal Tokyo Shimbun editorialized (9/10): "Just as the Iraq war has been labeled 'Bush's war,' the war in Afghanistan presents President Obama with a test for demonstrating his exit strategy and new counterterrorism measures.... The key to the exit strategy lies in marginalizing extremists and terrorists and helping the Afghan government reconstruct the country on its own initiative. Cooperation from the international community is imperative in order to prevent the situation from turning into another 'Vietnam War.'"

ROOS